

Amendment to the Claims

Kindly amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A valve assembly ~~for~~in a respirator comprising a valve body having a valve outlet portion and a valve inlet portion which together define a valve cavity for a valve mechanism permitting gas flow from the valve inlet portion to the valve outlet portion, an air purge means comprising a purge inlet, connectable to an air pressure supply means, an air purge outlet and an air deflection means in which the deflection means is spatially arranged relative to the valve mechanism and purge outlet so that, in use, air exiting the purge outlet and incident the air deflection means provides a curtain of air over the valve mechanism so as to inhibit exhaled and ambient air from flowing into the respirator; and in which the air purge means is configured so that the curtain of air is continuous when the purge inlet is connected to the air pressure supply means and the air pressure supply means is activated.

2. (original) A valve assembly according to Claim 1, in which the valve body is cylindrical in shape.

3. (previously presented) A valve assembly according to Claim 1, in which the valve inlet portion provides a seat for the valve mechanism.

4. (original) A valve assembly according to Claim 3, in which the purge inlet and outlet is associated with the valve inlet portion.
5. (original) A valve assembly according to Claim 4, in which the deflection means is associated with the valve outlet portion.
6. (previously presented) A valve assembly according to Claim 4, in which the purge outlet comprise one or more bores or channels in an upper surface of the valve inlet portion.
7. (original) A valve assembly according to Claim 6, in which the width of the bore or channel tapers inwardly towards to the valve outlet portion.
8. (previously presented) A valve assembly according to Claim 4, in which the deflection means comprise a cylindrical boss or embossment on an inner surface of the valve outer portion.
9. (previously presented) A valve assembly according to Claim 1, in which the outlet portion is associated with a dead-space protection member comprising air guide means.

10. (currently amended) A valve assembly according to Claim 89, in which the air guide means comprise a plurality of vanes defining air conduits communicating with the purge outlet.

11. (original) A valve assembly according to Claim 9, in which the vanes inwardly turn to toward the centre of the protection member.

12. (original) A valve assembly according to Claim 10, in which the vanes extend toward the valve inlet portion to a greater extent at or adjacent the centre of the protection member than at its edge.

13. (previously presented) A valve assembly according to Claim 9, in which the vane walls comprise inward radial protections or at adjacent the centre of the protection member.

14. (previously presented) A valve assembly according to Claim 1, in which the valve mechanism comprises a membrane.

15.-16. cancelled